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<chapter head> **CHAPTER 12**

Raunchy Recipes—The Foods of Love

Casanova, the 18th-century lover, apparently ate a daily breakfast of at least 50 oysters to boost his libido. And recently a scientific study vindicated the oyster as being one of the true aphrodisiacs. Especially in the spring ... it sounds almost too poetic to be true but ... scientists have revealed that it is in the legendary season of love that these little molluscs reveal their strongest qualities as a virility booster.

In fact, quite a few bi-valve mollusks, including clams and oysters contain a rare amino acid that has been found to trigger increased levels of sex hormones. Just what a renowned and traditional aphrodisiac is meant to do!

Dr George Fisher, a professor of chemistry at Barry University in Miami, his research team of graduate students and the Laboratory of Neurobiology in Naples confirmed this fascinating fact. Using a process of high-performance liquid chromatography they were able to identify the amino acids D-aspartic acid (D-Asp) and N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA). These are not normal amino acids, according to the scientists and as yet cannot be found in a vitamin shop or man-made medicine. They are unique to Mother Nature.

Dr D'Aniello from Naples Neurobiology Lab, concurs that oysters are definitely aphrodisiacs that help to increase the rare hormones in the blood that can stimulate sexual activity.

So before you dismiss this all as 'old wives tales', let's take a look at some famous aphrodisiacs and sexy recipes from around the world.

<A head> Aphrodisiacs: Some History

Since ancient times certain foods and medicines have been highly sought after for their aphrodisiac qualities. Not just to increase procreation and the essential continuance of the human race, but also to aid in both male and female potency and sexual pleasure.

There has always been a clear distinction made between which substances may increase fertility versus those that just increase sex drive and performance as well as heightening the sensuality and enjoyment of lovemaking.

Foods that also represent youth and the early bloom of life such as eggs, seeds, roots and bulbs have always been highly prized as aphrodisiacs.

Since first identified in written history by historians such as Plini, (BC), the Greek Dioscorides (first century AD) and later by Paul of Aegina in seventh century Europe, the important and continuing role of aphrodisiacs among most civilisations of the ancient and modern world provides a fascinating glimpse into the core reasons and causes of sexual stimulation, increased satisfaction and pleasure for pleasure's sake.

Many other types of foods or plant matter became sexually important because of their obvious visual resemblance or tactile similarity to human genitalia. Whether hairy, smooth and firm, or wet, soft and sticky like strawberries, oysters, snails, bananas, pomegranates, coconuts or honeycomb. Imbibing ingredients with similar natures and physical attributes to certain human characteristics was named 'sympathetic magic'. Since time immemorial these 'sympathetic techniques' became a mainstay in both the mixing up of love potions and magic spells as well as the official medicines of the herbalist or village doctor.

Some other libido boosting foods derived their aphrodisiac qualities straight from the ruling pantheons of the mythological gods and goddesses themselves. Venus, the love diva, was said to consider sparrows divinely linked to sexuality and love because of their randy lifestyle—so the tiny birds were included in lots of love brews and fertility potions of Ancient Rome and Greece. (Wonder when the scientists are going to stumble on the scientific reasons behind that!)

A little known fact is that there are also foods that are considered to be anti-sexy, or 'anaphrodisiacs'; ancient physicians took this very seriously and often medicos prescribed a sex-starved patient to avoid eating, or even sniffing any foods containing dill, lentil, lettuce, watercress and water lily. (I'll never consider going vegetarian again!)

There is not always agreement on what foods were really aphrodisiacs in ancient times, but the old texts definitely talk about anise, basil, carrot, orchid bulbs, pistachio nuts, rocket (arugula), fennel, snails, and the genital parts of many animals such as deers, wolves, bears and donkeys.

Mmmmm. I can handle the dozen oysters and rocket salad, but as for the other ingredients ... all sounds a bit too 'witches of Macbeth' for me. I think I'll stick with chocolate truffles and the following aphrodisiac ingredients and deliciously sexy recipes instead.

<A head> ***Aphrodisiac Ingredients***

Almonds. Their beautiful flavour and sensual healing power were famous in ancient Greece and Italy and the oil, meal and milk have been used in tonics, breads and in skin creams for hundreds of years before Christian times.

Bay leaves. An ancient cooking and medicinal herb used by the Romans and Greeks and adds flavour to tomato based sauces and meat dishes, as well as being great for stimulating sexual appetite and pre-menstrual tension.

Carraway seed. Baked in bread and added to cheese, a remedy for stimulating every kind of appetite as well as helping with laryngitis and cold and chest problems.

Celery The Ancient Romans dedicated celery to Pluto, then God of sex (and hell!). As well as being considered an aphrodisiac, it combats physical fatigue and helps stimulate the memory.

Cloves. Powerful as a natural aphrodisiac, but again very very small amounts need to be used as too much can irritate the mucous membranes.

Coriander. Dried seeds of the coriander can have a very euphoric effect. Traditionally it was added to wine to **boost that lovin' feeling..**

Garlic. Used for thousands of years as a stimulator in both food and medicine (what would spaghetti bolognese be without it?) As well as a sexual libido booster it is also a known

antibacterial agent.

Ginger. A very stimulating spice that has been used for centuries to excite the sexual senses and libido. Needs to be taken in very small doses though.

Goats milk or yoghurt. Drink it and bath in it, just like Cleopatra and the sexy girls of Old Egypt and Babylon.

Honey. We all know how heavenly it tastes but it is also a fantastic source of vitamins, and was used in ancient Europe, Rome and Egypt to soothe burns and dry skin as well as fertility and love potions.

Horseradish. As a food the condiment has similar sexual boosting powers to mustard and is a wonderful remedy for circulation problems and rheumatism.

Lemon verbena. The dried leaves can be drunk as an uplifting tea and its aroma and ingredients are sexually stimulating and energising.

Mustard. Since the Middle Ages was always thought to energise the sexual glands.

Nutmeg. In Indonesia this is thought of as more of a male aphrodisiac rather than a women's and is sometimes called 'man's best friend'! (Go easy because too much of it can be slightly hallucinogenic, exactly the reason it was sometimes used in old witches' 'flying' formulas.)

Onion. So ancient that it is said that Hippocrates, the father of medicine, recommended the juice as a curative for just about everything, including a lack of sexual libido. It's a great blood cleanser, good for water retention and the lymphatic system.

Orange (juice or peel). Used for centuries in love potions and perfumes. Contains a great source of Vitamin C so can help with symptoms of colds and flu.

Parsley. Tasty, colourful and high in vitamins, it has been used since ancient times for fresh breath, which can definitely aid in the love-making department!

Pepper Contains a high amount of vitamin C. [It can be a sexually exciting agent](#) that stimulates the circulation. Little red and green Mexican chilies have the same [passionate properties](#).

Peppermint. Lovely libido lifting and tasty tea as well as a remedy for headaches and nausea. proven can actually effects male and female hormones.

Saffron. Used to stimulate the erogenous zones. [Though a little bit goes a long way.](#)

Thyme. Great for the nerves in small doses and as well as a sexual tonic in can be a powerful cleanser for the body.

Vanilla. Its sweet and calming smell has an aphorising effect on the body and through its scent can enhance recipes and perfumes in sexual stimulation.

<A head> **APHRODISIAC RECIPES**

It is not just the type or quality of the food that creates an aphrodisiac, it is also about the aura of sensuality and the erotic atmosphere that you create while cooking, tasting, stirring and serving the finished meal. That special glance, tender thoughts of love, all are potent whisperings which give a recipe its ultimate touch of sexiness and aphrodisia.

Kama Sutra Shake

In honour of the Tantric Divas, try this unique recipe from India to kick off your night!

1 tablespoon clarified butter

1 bunch of fennel

1 teaspoon honey

1 teaspoon liquorice powder

150 ml (5 fl oz) milk

150 ml (5 fl oz) centrifuged fennel juice

Heat the butter until it froths, then skim with a muslin filter. Wash and dry the fennel. Centrifuge to obtain 150 ml of liquid. Process all ingredients in a blender. To serve pour into two ice-filled glasses.

Latins have always been renowned for living their lives to the full. Not to mention celebrating love and passion in everything they do. I'm married to a passionate Italian – so I know that to be very true indeed! These next sensually themed recipes have been translated from the Italian language courtesy of a true bella donna, Marina Melvizza. Visit her wonderfully diverse cooking site at www.mangiarebene.com

Eggs with White Truffle (Uova al piatto con tartufo bianco)

In Ancient Roman times the aphrodisiac properties of truffles were already well known. In his famous treatise on cooking, De Re Coquinaria, Apicius exalts the wondrous effects of the mushroom, and indicates six different ways of using it. With the fall of the empire its magic properties were forgotten and it was only in the 17th century that the French started to vaunt the miraculous qualities of truffles. The famous gastronome Brillat Savarin (1755–1826) dedicates six whole pages of his Physiologie du goût to its erotic properties.

white truffle
4 eggs
butter
salt

Clean the truffle by brushing it to remove all the earth. Fry the eggs in the butter and when they are ready serve them with a grating of truffle and a sprinkle of salt.

Oysters

Oysters are famous for their aphrodisiac qualities due to a high mineral salt and glycogen content, an essential element in muscle contraction. An old tale tells of a man who was advised to eat a dozen oysters to boost his sexual prowess. When asked whether they had worked he answered, 'Not really, I ate twelve oysters but only ten worked'. For your romantic meal, serve the oysters on a bed of crushed ice on a silver platter. While you make eye contact with voluptuous expectation, you toast your companion and swallow an oyster.

24 oysters (Belon or Marennes, if possible)
2 lemons, cut in quarters
crushed ice

Only buy oysters at a trusted fishmonger. If really fresh they can be kept for two days in a very cold fridge. If you have to travel use a thermal picnic bag. Oysters are very difficult to open so your best bet is to invest in an oyster opener. If on the other hand you want to open them with the oyster knife, we suggest you wear a thick gardening glove to avoid spending the night at the emergency ward.

Once open lay them on the ice-covered platter and squeeze a little lemon on each one as

you eat them. Only eat the ones that contract when they come into contact with the lemon as that means they are still alive and edible.

You can help to loosen them from the shell with a small fork and then suck them directly into your mouth. Hold them up against your palate a few seconds to relish their flavour and then swallow them whole without chewing. This is the only way real connoisseurs eat oysters.

Lover's salad (Insalata degli innamorati)

Prepare this gluttonous delight in advance so that you have plenty of time to get ready for your romantic tête à tête. Red rosé, sparkling wine and a little imagination will do the rest.

1 avocado
300 g (10 oz) shelled, boiled prawns (shrimp), fresh or frozen
2 celery hearts, diced
4 walnuts, shelled
4 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon tomato sauce
1 tablespoon cream

Carefully halve the avocados and set the skin halves aside. Remove the pit stone and dice the flesh into small pieces. Drop the prawns into boiling water for 30 seconds, then cool. Put the avocado flesh in a bowl with the prawns, celery and chopped walnuts. Dress with a pink sauce made by mixing 4 tablespoons of mayonnaise with one tablespoon each of tomato sauce and cream. Fill the avocado halves with the mixture and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Eat me

Prepare them in advance and keep in fridge until a good moment. A little trick to convert a shy lover [into](#) a 'spicy' one!

4 petite Suisse cheeses
4 drops Tabasco sauce
1 tablespoon milk
salt and pepper
4 slices of white bread for sandwiches
butter, softened
asparagus tips

Melt the cheese with tabasco and milk; season with salt and pepper. Lightly butter the bread, then cover every slice with the creamy cheese mixture. Cut the bread into hearts with a heart-shaped cookie cutter. Decorate hearts with asparagus tips.

Cleopatra's Stuffed Caramel Walnuts

Cleopatra (69 AD–30 AD), the Egyptian queen of legendary beauty, was famous for her

amatorial charms that rendered her irresistible to the men who met her. She had a child with Caesar, Cesarione, then, after Caesar's assassination she fell in love with Mark Anthony, causing much jealousy amongst the Roman senators, many of whom accused her of being a witch. Anthony, stabbed by Octavius, died in her arms and Cleopatra, realising her end was near, let herself be poisoned by an asp.

This recipe has been deciphered from a hieroglyphic. These sweets were served at wedding banquets and given their high energy value, we imagine that Cleopatra offered them to her lovers to restore their spirits.

50 g (1½ oz) almond flour
100 g (3½ oz) sugar
1–2 tablespoons orange essence
30 walnut halves

Mix the almond flour (milled almonds) with 50 g of the sugar and enough orange essence to form a paste. Place a little of this paste between two walnut halves and press. Repeat with remaining walnuts halves.

Melt the rest of the sugar in a pan with a few drops of water and when it starts to turn to caramel, remove it from the heat source and dip the nuts in the caramel to coat.

Set them out on greaseproof paper to dry.

Banana Ice-Cream

A little dessert to sensualise your tête à tête. Energising and light. Taste it with sensual pleasure, looking into each other's eyes, whispering tender love words like 'siu timtim' — 'I adore you, honey' in Chinese. You'll touch heaven!

2 large, ripe bananas
250 g (8 oz) natural yogurt
50 ml (2½ fl oz) maple syrup
75 g (2¾ oz) sugar
juice of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon vanilla flavour
3 maraschino cherries, to decorate

Peel the bananas and keep the peels wrapped in cling film to avoid oxidation.

Put the bananas and all the other ingredients into a bowl and mix well.

Make ice cream as usual in the ice-cream machine or freeze in a large, metallic bowl, stirring frequently.

When the ice-cream is ready, place it in the banana skins and decorate to taste with the maraschino cherries.

Chocolate Heart Cake (Torta degli innamorati)

This scrumptious, soft cake is perfect for celebrating Valentine's Day; a sweet tender delight.

200 g (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) bitter chocolate
200 g (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) butter
4 eggs, separated
100 g (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) sugar
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons vanilla powder
1 heart-shaped baking tin
whipped cream, strawberries and raspberries to serve

Preheat oven to 160° C (310° F). Melt the chocolate with the butter in a microwave or double boiler. Cool and stir in the egg yolks.

Whip the egg whites to stiff peaks with the sugar and vanilla. Fold the chocolate into the egg whites gently and pour the mixture into a heart-shaped baking tin that you have buttered and dusted with flour.

Bake for 25 minutes then turn off the oven and leave the cake inside until it cools.

Served with whipped cream and decorate with strawberries or raspberries.

Champagne Ice-Cream

An elegant dessert to surprise your date. This original dessert combines the sweet, cool delight of a homemade ice-cream with the sparkling excitement of Champagne. You serve the ice-cream in two tall flutes full of champagne. Relax and enjoy the evening.

250 ml (8 oz) milk
40 g (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) icing sugar
rind of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
2 egg yolks
100 ml (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ fl oz) whipped cream
250 ml (8 oz) Champagne
Extra Champagne

Put the milk, sugar and lemon rind in a saucepan and break in the egg yolks. Stir continuously on low heat until mixture comes to the boil. Remove the rind and let it cool. When the mixture is cold fold in the whipped cream and the Champagne and place in an ice-cold metal container. Place in the freezer for an hour and stir every 20 minutes with an electric blender or whisk. Serve in chilled champagne flutes with chilled Champagne poured over the top.

Sample Reading from book – Kinky Couture by Deborah Gray

Retail - \$19.95 AUD – www.deborahgraymagick.com

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